THE FOURTH CHURCH PULPIT

The Triumph of the Meek

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John M. Buchanan

So we journey through Holy Week with Christ. But the church walks with Christ not simply as his best friends and compatriots, but also as those who are faint of heart and slow to understand. As Mark characterizes that dusty journey toward Jerusalem, '...Jesus was walking ahead of them; and they were amazed ... and afraid.'(Mark 10:32) The church, despite its best efforts to follow faithfully is always amazed, even afraid. We keep thinking that the way leads to Palm Sunday not Good Friday. God forbid that this should happen to him - or to us. There has to be some way to be faithful without paying a price. Holy Week reminds us again: we do not walk with him. We trudge halfheartedly behind him. We go on to Jerusalem where once again he reveals that he is not only for us - he is forever ahead of us.

William Willimon
On a Wild and Windy Mountain

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The Olympic Games are about winning, competing, beating your opponent, dominating the opposition. At the Special Olympics in Seattle a few years ago, nine mentally handicapped children lined up at the starting line for the 100 yard dash. At the gun they all came out sprinting as fast as they could. One little boy, in the middle of the pack, stumbled and fell down, and began to cry in shame and disappointment and embarrassment. The other eight heard his cries and slowed down and stopped and turned around and walked back to him. A little girl with Down Syndrome bent down to help him up and kissed him and said "this will make it better." And then all nine held hands and walked to the finish line. The crowd, at first silent, cheered for a long time. People who saw it are still telling the story.

It's a Palm Sunday story. It means that what we call winning and succeeding ultimately doesn't mean very much. Palm Sunday means that the ultimate realities in this world are compassion and kindness and love and extending heart and hand to the least of these our brothers and sisters, and, in his name, the name of Jesus Christ, to extend his love and compassion and justice to the city, the world, to our spouses, children, parents, our lovers, friends and colleagues.

> "All Glory Laud and Honor
> to Thee Redeemer King
> To whom the lips of children
> Made Sweet Hosannas Ring"

A triumph of the meek.

Thanks be to God. Amen